

U.S. Missile Edge Found Shrinking

By Karl E. Meyer

Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Nov. 19 (Friday)
The United States still possesses overwhelming superiority over the Soviet Union in terms of nuclear missiles, but not by so great a margin as a year ago.

Contrary to official claims made by either country, India and Pakistan suffered roughly equal losses of men, tanks and planes during their military conflict last September.

In terms of manpower, Rhodesia's military force of 4300 at least theoretically confronts 492,000 men under arms in the 36 countries belonging to the Organization for African Unity.

These were three significant conclusions that emerged from the annual report of the world military balance made public today by the authoritative Institute for Strategic Studies.

Known for Reliability

Since its founding in 1958, the Institute has gained a reputation for being the most reliable nonofficial compiler of military information. The ISS is headquartered in London but draws on qualified members in 26 countries for its data.

On its Great Power scorecard, the Institute reports that in early 1966 the United States will have a lead of about 3 to 1 over the Soviet Union in long-range ballistic missiles, compared with a ratio of more than 4 to 1 early this year.

Alastair Buchan, director of ISS, explained that the decreased lead will be due in part to scrapping of missiles like Atlas that Washington considers obsolete. The Institute calculates that early next year the United States will command 824 ICBMS as against 925 in early 1965, while Russia has gone up from about 200 to 270.

Moreover, the diminished gap in intercontinental missiles must be set against a growing gap in seaborne missiles rise from 480 to 544 in the

West while the East will reach this class early next year.

Finally, the Institute reports that the Western alliance will still command three times as many long-range heavy bombers (625) as the Communist countries (200).

Figures on Conflict

Concerning the conflict between India and Pakistan, the ISS makes these estimates:

- India suffered casualties of between 4000 to 6000 men, lost up to 300 tanks and about 50 aircraft.

- Pakistan suffered from 3000 to 5000 casualties, lost more than 250 tanks and up to 50 aircraft.

The information on comparative military strength in Africa was set forth in an annex added at the last minute to the 47-page report, which, incidentally, is for sale at \$1.50 at ISS offices at 18 Adam st., London, WC2.

According to the Institute, Rhodesia has total regular forces of 4300. This compares with 2500 and 1500 in neighboring Zambia and Malawi.

Countries belonging to the Organization for African Unity, which is unanimous in opposing Rhodesia's seizure of independence, have a total of 492,500 men serving in regular armed forces.

But the largest armies are in relatively remote Egypt (180,000) and Algeria (60,000), the two countries that also possess a significant number of combat airplanes—respectively, 400 and 60.

However, these statistics do not reflect the differences in training and competence of the armed forces, nor do they take into account the logistics problems of supporting a major military effort against Rhodesia by air.

The Institute lists the air force strength of Rhodesia as comprising one squadron each of Hunter and Vampire fighters, Canberra light bombers and Dakota transports. Squadron strength can vary from six to twelve planes.

Finally, the ISS report also calls attention the military potential of nuclear research and power reactors either in use or planned in non-nuclear countries.

Hypothetically, if safeguards for peaceful use were ignored, India would be able to produce 76 Nagasaki-size bombs a year when its Tarapur power reactor becomes operational in 1968. India already has in use a Canadian-built research reactor that could in theory provide uranium.

*Pres Meyer, Karl E.
Cag. Institute for
Strategic Studies
Pres Buchan, Alastair*